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11. (U) Greece's submission for the 2009-2010 INCSR, Part 1:

Greece 2009-2010 INCSR Part I: Drugs and Chemical Control

II. Summary

Greece is a "gateway" country in the transit of illicit drugs and contraband. Although not a major transit country for drugs headed for the United States, Greece is part of the traditional "Balkan Route" for drugs flowing from drug-producing countries in the east to drug-consuming countries in Western Europe. Greek authorities report that drug abuse and addiction continue to climb in Greece as the age for first-time drug use drops. Drug trafficking remains a significant issue for Greece in its battle against organized crime. Investigations initiated by the DEA and its Greek counterparts suggest that a dramatic rise has occurred in the number and size of drug trafficking organizations operating in Greece.

During 2009, the DEA and Hellenic authorities conducted numerous counternarcotics investigations, which resulted in significant arrests, narcotics seizures, and the dismantling of drug trafficking organizations. The Greek court system and the Ministry of Justice continued to lack databases for the case management and tracking of convictions and sentences for traffickers. Greece is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

With an extensive coastline, numerous islands, and land borders with other drug transit countries, Greece's geography makes it a favored drug transshipment country on the route to Western Europe. Greece is also home to the world's largest merchant marine fleet. While many of these vessels fly flags of countries such as Panama and Liberia, it is estimated that Greek firms own one out of every six cargo vessels and control 20-25 percent of cargo shipments worldwide. The utilization of cargo vessels is the cheapest, fastest and most secure method to transport multi-ton quantities of cocaine from South America to distribution centers in Europe and the United States.

Greece is not a significant drug producing country. However, in recent years, Greek authorities have noted a rise in marijuana production. Some of the Greece-based organizations involved in marijuana production have exported large quantities of the drug to countries in Western Europe, such as Holland. Greek authorities estimate that annual production of the drug, most of which is exported, appears to be well over 80 tons. Crete, Arcadia, Messinia, Ileia, and Laconia are the top production regions, while only Arta and Grevena appear to have completely clean records. Only 10-20 percent of the domestically grown marijuana is believed to be consumed locally. Marijuana for local consumption is also imported from Albania.

III. Country Actions against Drugs in 2009

Policy Initiatives. Greece participates in the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative's (SECI) anticrime initiative and in a specialized counternarcotics task force at the regional Anti-Crime Center in Bucharest. Enhanced cooperation among SECI member states has the potential to disrupt and eventually eliminate the ability of drug trafficking organizations to operate in the region.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Several notable joint U.S./Greek counternarcotics investigations occurred during 2009 with significant arrests and seizures. Drug trafficking organizations in the Balkan region, including Greece, usually transport Afghan heroin from the Middle East and Turkey to Western Europe. Recent

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investigations and trends indicate more frequent and larger cocaine seizures made by Greek authorities. In recent years Greek counternarcotics authorities have had increasing success tackling leadership elements in major drug trafficking organizations.

In October 2009, after domestic elections and a change of government, Greek authorities reorganized their law enforcement ministries, creating the new Ministry of Citizen's Protection (MCP). The MCP gained oversight over the Hellenic Police and Hellenic Coast Guard and all related counternarcotics divisions. While the narcotics police do not have dedicated seaborne units, the Hellenic Coast Guard has its own drug unit for maritime interdiction. Specialized financial units work with customs authorities for interdiction at ports.

In late December 2008, the DEA Athens Country Office received intelligence regarding a container scheduled to arrive in Greece from Colombia carrying a large quantity of cocaine concealed in wood. The intelligence received indicated that this method was highly sophisticated and the cocaine would be undetectable to both trained canines and scanning equipment. This information was passed to the Greek authorities and in early January 2009 they identified the container and found inside eight pallets of plywood totaling six hundred pieces. Greek authorities scanned the plywood, using five trained drug odor-detecting canines, but none of the canines detected the presence of cocaine. After conducting a more detailed search, Greek authorities discovered four pieces of wood containing 70 kilograms of cocaine divided into 285 packages.

On January 29, 2009, Hellenic police in Athens raided a cocaine lab and arrested one person of Uzbek nationality and one Greek. Greek authorities seized 2.95 kilograms of cocaine, 0.7 kilograms of unprocessed marijuana, and 9.5 kilograms of white powder used to "cut" the cocaine.

In early February 2009, Greek authorities made two separate heroin seizures at the Greece-Turkey border crossing at Kipoi. In the first case, authorities arrested two Bulgarian nationals and seized 57.8 kilograms of heroin. In the other case, authorities arrested an Italian national and seized 38 kilograms of heroin. In both cases the heroin was hidden in a vehicle attempting to enter Greece from Turkey.

In February 2009, Greek authorities completed a two-month investigation resulting in the dismantling of a family-operated hashish trafficking organization operating in Greece. The organization imported hashish from Albania. At the conclusion of the investigation, authorities arrested eight individuals and seized 160.5 kilograms of hashish and 437,455 euro (656,000 USD) in cash.

On July 6, 2009, the Hellenic Police announced that they had dismantled two drug trafficking rings and arrested eight foreign nationals. During the first raid, police seized 5.635 kilograms of heroin and 140 grams of cocaine. Police also raided a heroin laboratory and discovered an arms cache with multiple rifles and 5 kilograms of explosives.

In July 2009, DEA Athens provided intelligence to the Hellenic Special Control Services (YPEE) on five containers loaded with scrap metal and shipped from Bolivia. YPEE x-rayed the containers, revealing suspect metal boxes inside. Greek authorities discovered a total of eight boxes, constructed of heavy seal and with all openings welded shut, containing 457 kilograms of cocaine, divided into 400 packages.

In August 2009, Greek authorities arrested five individuals transporting marijuana in the eastern outskirts of Athens. The marijuana came from Albania and was brought into Greece via the island of Corfu.

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While Greek law enforcement authorities achieved successes in making seizures and arrests, the Greek court system and the Ministry of Justice continued to lack databases to track convictions and sentences for traffickers. This lack of information management capacity also hindered the ability of law enforcement authorities to manage and complete complex, long-term investigations in narcotics trafficking.

Drug Seizure Statistics, 2005-2007

Source: Coordinating Body for Drug Enforcement, National Information Unit

Statistics are provided in this format: 2005 / 2006 / 2007

Drug Seizures (Cases): 10,461 / 9,873 / 9,540

Accused Persons (Persons): 14,922 / 13,963 / 13,253

Cannabis:

Processed Hashish (kg): 10,209.28 / 74.964 / 4.833

Unprocessed Cannabis (kg): 8,004.04 / 12,314.205 / 6,909.688

Hashish "Honey Oil" (kg): 3.011 / 0.523 / 1.484

Cannabis Plants (units): 34,993 / 32,495 / 17,611

Opiates:

Heroin and Morphine (kg): 331.329 / 312.243 / 259.33

Raw Opium (kg): 1.680 / 0.314 / 24.891

Methadone (kg): 8.719 / 9.456 / 24.783

Codeine (tablets): 0 / 50.5 / 0

Other Opiates (kg): 0.023 / 0.419 / 0.005

Poppy Plants (units): 0 / 0 / 62

Stimulants:

Cocaine (kg): 42.819 / 60.658 / 225.247

Coca Leaves (kg): 0.005 / 0.898 / 0.115

Amphetamines (kg): 1.11 / 0.05 / 0.112

Methamphetamines (kg): 0.09 / 0.006 / 0.066

Crystal Methamphetamines (kg): 0 / 0 / 0.079

Ecstasy (kg): 0.023 / 0.051 / 0.281

Qat (kg): 34.398 / 25.08 / 10.697

New Synthetic Drugs (kg): 0 / 0.288 / 0.047

Narcotic Pharmaceuticals:

Hallucinogens (kg): 0 / 0.83 / 0

LSD (drops): 120 / 146 / 2,880

LSD (tablets): 6 / 120 / 4

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Psilocybin (kg): 0 / 0.041 / 0

Tranquilizers (kg): 0.1 / 0.058 / 0.261

Barbiturates (kg): 0.003 / 0 / 0

Precursor Substances:

Ephedrine Hydrochloride (tablets): 1088 / 14 / 0

Sassafras Oil (liters): 0 / 0 / 3

Burgled Drugstores: 43 / 33 / 19

Drug Seizure Statistics, 2008 (Attica Region Only)

Sources: Hellenic National Police (HNP), Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), and the Hellenic Special Control Service (YPPEE)

Drug Seizures (cases): 895

Persons Arrested: 1,129

Marijuana/Hashish (kg): 328

Heroin (kg): 296

Cocaine (kg): 3,246 (includes 3,210 kg seized by the French Coast Guard, using Greek intelligence)

Coca Leaves (kg): 0.0059

Cash Seized (euro): 659,648 euro (989,000 USD)

Corruption. Officers and representatives of Greece's law enforcement agencies are generally under-trained and underpaid. Thus, corruption in law enforcement is a problem. In November 2007, corrupt law enforcement officers and politicians were involved with a large-scale, international drug trafficking organization that was producing multi-ton quantities of marijuana on the island of Crete. Subsequent investigation revealed that this organization had exported large quantities of marijuana to Holland for many years. In September 2008, a former Minister and personal aide of the Prime Minister was convicted and given a 12-month suspended prison sentence for intervening on behalf of a constituent who was growing cannabis.

As a matter of government policy, Greece neither encourages nor facilitates the illicit production or distribution of narcotics, psychotropic drugs, or other controlled substances or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions.

Agreements and Treaties. Greece is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by its 1972 Protocol. An agreement between Greece and the United States to exchange information on narcotics trafficking has been in force since 1928. A bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty and an extradition treaty between the U.S. and Greece are in force. In addition, the Greek parliament ratified the U.S.-EU mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements in September 2009.

However, in practice the Greek government refuses to extradite Greek nationals and Greek-Americans to the United States, because to do so would violate article 438 of the Greek penal code. The United States and Greece also have concluded a customs mutual assistance agreement (CMAA). The CMAA allows for the exchange of

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information, intelligence, and documents to assist in the prevention and investigation of customs offenses, including the identification and screening of containers that pose a terrorism risk. Greece ratified the UN Convention against Corruption in September 2008; Greece has signed, but has not yet ratified, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Cultivation/Production. Marijuana is the only illicit drug produced in Greece. In November 2007, Greek authorities dismantled a large-scale, international drug trafficking organization that was producing marijuana on the island of Crete. Documents found by Greek authorities indicate that the organization had been supplying ton quantities of marijuana to countries in Western Europe for many years.

Greek authorities continued to discover marijuana cultivation areas throughout 2009. In March, police arrested a marijuana grower in Iraklion, Crete. In July, police destroyed 39 cannabis plants in Messinia, in southern Greece. During the same month, police in Athens destroyed 885 plants fed by an automatic spring irrigation system. Police in Chania, Crete announced in July that they had confiscated 1,493 cannabis plants and 11 kilograms of unprocessed marijuana since the beginning of 2009.

Drug Flow/Transit. Greece is part of the "Balkan Route" and as such is a transshipment country for Afghan heroin, and marijuana coming predominantly from the Middle East and Africa. 2007 statistics, released in 2008, indicate that one ton of heroin transited the city of Thessaloniki--only 10% of which was confiscated by police. In addition, metric-ton quantities of marijuana and smaller quantities of other drugs (principally synthetic drugs) are trafficked into Greece from Albania, Bulgaria, and the Republic of Macedonia. Hashish is offloaded in remote areas of the country and transported to Western Europe by boat or overland. Larger shipments are smuggled into Greece in shipping containers, on bonded Transport International Routier ("TIR") trucks, in automobiles, on trains, and in buses. Some Afghan heroin is smuggled into the United States by way of Greece, but there is no evidence that significant amounts of narcotics are entering the United States from Greece.

Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction. Drug addiction problems continued to increase in Greece. According to 2006 statistics from the National Documentation Center for Narcotics and Addiction, run by the Mental Health Research Institute of the Medical School of the University of Athens, 19.4 percent of the Greek population between 12 and 64 years of age reported that they experimented or used an illegal substance at least once. The most commonly used substances were chemical solvents, marijuana, and heroin. There was a surge in the illegal use of tranquilizers and, to a lesser extent, Ecstasy pills, reflecting growth in the European synthetic drug market. The government of Greece estimated that there were between 20,000 and 30,000 addicts in Greece and that the addict population was growing; approximately 20,000 individuals were addicted to heroin, and 9,500 of this population used injected heroin. Recent enforcement trends indicated a rise in the distribution and use of cocaine within Greece and in Europe in general. Cocaine use has tripled in Europe over the past decade.

Media reported in March 2009 that the Ministry of Justice and universities in Thessaloniki faced serious problems testing the urine and blood samples of detainees claiming to be drug addicts, leading to delays in trials. According to the reports, Thessaloniki police also experienced trouble storing samples.

Demand reduction programs in Greece are typically government-supported; few drug prevention and treatment programs with independent or private funding exist. The DEA regularly conducts Demand Reduction Seminars for parents and students attending local and international elementary and high schools throughout Greece.

The Organization against Narcotics (OKANA) is a

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government-supported agency that coordinates the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addiction in Greece. Besides OKANA, other officially supported drug treatment organizations include the Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA), the "18 Ano" Detoxification Unit of the Psychiatric Hospital of Attika, the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki, the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Athens, and other public hospitals in Greece which run joint programs with OKANA. OKANA operates 71 prevention centers, 57 therapeutic rehabilitation centers (33 of which offer "drug free" programs), and 24 drug addiction substitution centers, offering methadone and buprenorphine. In 2006, 4,847 drug addicts were treated (a 14% increase over 2005), and while 3,250 individuals were treated in drug substitution programs, as of May 2007 the waiting list was 4,000 persons. OKANA extended its programs to new regions in 2007 and 2008 despite strong local reactions against the establishment of treatment centers.

KETHEA operates 90 centers throughout Greece offering prevention, support, and drug awareness programs, as well as social rehabilitation, therapeutic communities in jails, street work programs, training, and a hot line. KETHEA reported offering its services to approximately 3,000 drugs users and family members each day. Demand for these prevention and treatment programs continues to outstrip supply. In June 2008, a Thessaloniki newspaper reported that a lack of funding for drug addiction treatment and prevention centers in the city contributed to long waiting lists for these rehabilitation programs. The report indicated that 950 persons were in treatment but that the waiting list was approximately 1,500 persons long.

Narcotics Anonymous runs over 27 drug abstinence and anti-addiction programs throughout Greece.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Bilateral Cooperation. DEA agents work with the Hellenic Police to support coordination of regional counternarcotics efforts through joint operations as well as training seminars. The DEA Athens Country Office conducted multiple workshops throughout the country with counterparts from the Hellenic Police and Hellenic Coast Guard during this year. The workshops provided an opportunity for DEA personnel and Greek counterparts to receive and exchange ideas on various issues, including regional drug trends, the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism, officer safety and survival, undercover operations, and confidential source management. The workshops were well received by Greek law enforcement authorities and the Hellenic Police has expressed interest in further events.

In February 2009, agents from DEA Athens organized a narcotics cooperation seminar for Greek police, Customs, and Coast Guard officers in Thessaloniki. In May 2009, a DEA international training team traveled to Athens and conducted a week-long regional drug enforcement seminar for Greek, Bulgarian, and Cypriot authorities.

Due to Greece's unique geographic significance as a border state for the European Union (EU) with over 9,900 miles of coastline to monitor, the DEA conducted an assessment of drug trafficking through Greek islands over several months in 2009. The assessment

confirmed that drugs regularly enter Greece (and the EU) through islands near to Turkey and Albania.

Prior to the DEA assessment, law enforcement authorities believed that human smuggling and drug trafficking organizations may have used the same routes, but operated independently. However, the Greek islands study identified an emerging trend--illegal immigrants are increasingly being used as drug couriers. The assessment also found that Greek authorities assigned to Greek islands are understaffed, under-trained, and have limited resources to combat the threats they face.

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The Road Ahead. The United States continues to encourage the government of Greece to participate actively in international organizations focused on narcotics assistance coordination efforts, such as the Dublin Group of narcotics assistance donor countries. U.S. agencies in Greece seek to enhance the ability of Greek law enforcement authorities to share and disseminate information, disrupt drug trafficking, and build expertise in complex investigations. The DEA will continue to organize regional and international conferences, seminars, and workshops with the goal of building regional cooperation and coordination in the effort against narcotics trafficking.

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